

VIOLENT CRIME TOTAL

DEFINITION

Violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. All violent crimes involve force or threat of force.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1999	1,426,044	523.0
2000	1,424,289	506.1
Percent change	-0.1	-3.2

The number of violent crimes reported to the Nation’s law enforcement agencies in 2000 remains virtually unchanged from a year ago, with approximately 1.4 million violent crimes reported. The 2000 volume is the lowest violent crime total since 1985 and is a decline of 15.6 percent from the 1996 level and a 25.5-percent decrease from the 1991 level. In comparison to 1999 figures, the 2000 violent crime figures declined 0.1 percent overall in the United States’ cities. Collectively among city population groupings, violent crime increased in cities with populations of less than 100,000 inhabitants. Increases in violent crime ranged from 0.2 percent in cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999 to 2.2 percent in cities with 10,000 to 24,999 inhabitants. Conversely, violent crimes in cities with populations greater than 100,000 inhabitants fell 0.4 percent. Among population groupings, rural counties had the greatest decline at 2.8 percent. Suburban counties showed a decline of 0.4 percent.

The South, the most populous region in the United States, accounted for 40.9 percent of all violent crimes in 2000. In the Nation’s other regions, the West reported 23.1 percent of all violent crimes; the Midwest, 19.3 percent; and the Northeast, 16.7 percent. Two of the Nation’s four regions reported increases in violent crime from 1999 to 2000. The West recorded a 1.0-percent rise in violent crimes, and the South had an increase of 0.5 percent. A 2.0-percent decline was experienced in the Northeast. The Midwest had a decline of 1.1 percent. (See Table 4.)

Violent offenses in 2000 occurred most frequently in the month of May and least often during February. (See Table 2.2.)

Table 2.2

Violent Crime Total by Month

Percent distribution, 1996-2000

Month	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
January	8.3	8.1	8.4	8.2	7.7
February	7.6	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.4
March	8.0	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.4
April	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.3
May	8.6	8.9	8.7	8.8	9.2
June	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.5	8.6
July	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.3	9.0
August	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.1	8.9
September	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.6
October	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.6	8.7
November	7.8	7.8	7.7	8.0	7.6
December	8.1	7.6	7.8	8.0	7.7

Rate

The year 2000 had the lowest national violent crime rate since 1978, a rate of 506.1 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants. The violent crime rate fell 3.2 percent from 1999 to 2000; 20.5 percent from the 1996 rate; and 33.2 percent from the 1991 rate. There were 561.4 offenses

per 100,000 inhabitants in the Nation’s metropolitan areas and 401.5 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants in cities outside metropolitan areas. Rural counties collectively had a violent crime rate of 209.7 offenses per 100,000 in population.

All regions of the country registered declines in violent crime rates. The Northeast reported a 5.3-percent decline; the South, a 3.3-percent drop; the Midwest, a 2.9-percent fall; and the West, a 2.2-percent decrease. A violent crime rate of 580.6 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants was registered in the South; 520.9 in the West; 443.4 in the Northeast; and 427.8 in the Midwest. (See Table 4.)

Nature

Aggravated assaults accounted for 63.9 percent of all violent crimes in 2000, and robberies made up an additional 28.6 percent. Forcible rapes comprised 6.3 percent of all violent crimes, and homicides constituted 1.1 percent of the total.

Personal weapons, such as hands, fists, feet, etc., were used in 31.5 percent of all murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults, collectively, in 2000. Other dangerous weapons were used in 27.9 percent of all violent crimes; firearms were used in 25.6 percent; and knives or cutting instruments were used in 15.0 percent. Data concerning weapons used in connection with forcible rape were not collected.

Law Enforcement Response

The overall violent crime clearance rate was 47.5 percent in 2000. Of the crimes cleared, 63.1 percent of murders and 56.9 percent of aggravated assaults were cleared. The crime of forcible rape had a 46.9-percent clearance rate, and robbery had a 25.7-percent clearance rate.

Of the estimated 625,132 persons arrested for violent crimes in 2000, 82.6 percent were males, 84.1 percent were adults, and 59.9 percent were white. Persons under 25-years-old made up 44.4 percent of all violent crime arrestees. The violent crime arrestees accounted for 4.5 percent of the total arrests for all offenses and 27.8 percent of the total Index crime arrests. (See Tables 29, 38, 41, 42, and 43.)

A decline of 1.4 percent was registered for the total number of arrests for violent crime throughout the United States from 1999 to 2000. Rural counties and suburban counties noted violent crime arrest increases of 1.5 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively. As a group, cities had a 2.1-percent decline for violent crime arrests. Arrests of juveniles (persons under age 18) for violent crime decreased 4.4 percent, and adult arrests fell 0.8 percent from 1999 levels. (For a breakdown of persons arrested by city, suburban, and rural areas, see Section IV, Persons Arrested.)

FIGURE 2.5

VIOLENT CRIME

